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Military Reserve Status of University Graduates

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1. The information [] on the military reserve status of students in universities in the USSR is generally applicable as of about mid-1941 and, probably, later. In 1941, the USSR had over one million reserve officers. They were poorly trained and there was too large a number of officers. These difficulties existed primarily because of the rather inefficient reserve system in force in the USSR before 1939. Three factors improved the reserve situation for the long range in 1939:
 - (a) The draft age was lowered from 21 to 18,
 - (b) beginning in 1936 or 1938, high school graduates were better trained than previously, thereby improving the quality of officers who came from that group; and
 - (c) from about 1936, army pay was greatly increased and, therefore, more and better students were available for the military schools.
2. From 1939 all students were drafted for compulsory army training of two or three years duration at the age of 18. Therefore, they underwent this

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training prior to attending a university or a technical institute. When the young men had finished their two or three years in the army they emerged either as privates or noncommissioned officers in the reserve. After graduating from a university they were at once made reserve lieutenants. Students who graduated as doctors of medicine immediately received the rank of reserve captain.

3. In theory, new reserve officers after graduating from university, were supposed to take two months of military training once every two years. In practice this was rarely done. If the university student graduated in some technical field, such as that of engineering, he was commissioned in his specialty. However, if he had majored in such subjects as history, literature, or mathematics, he was then made a reserve lieutenant of the air in which he had served when he was a draftee. The "RayonVoenKomat" (Rayoni Voeni Komissariat - military Commissariat of a Rayon) decided to which reserve branch the university graduate would be assigned. There were 28 "VoenKomats" in Moscow and also, of course, one in each "Rayon" in country areas. The "VoenKomats" were staffed by men who held military rank, but were primarily political in character rather than military. Their general mission was to have ready lists of people, equipment, and training which would be needed in event of war. They listed those who should not be called up for armed service in event of hostilities, as well as those who should be.
4. The Soviet Government had difficulty in obtaining sufficient reserve officers for the artillery, air force, and navy, because there were no closely comparable civilian university programs for these services. For a while there was also a shortage of people, [redacted] or the chemical service. Therefore, there existed an organization called "OSQAVIAKHIM" (Obshestvo Sadeystvie Aviatii i Khimii - Organisation to Aid Aviation and the Chemical Service). The organization was so called prior to 1941. Later, [redacted] it was called "DOSAR" (Dobrovolnoye Obshestvo Sadeystvie Armii - Voluntary Association to Aid the Army). "DOSAR" was intended to be of help to both the army and air force. "OSQAVIAKHIM" was intended for young high school and university students and for young factory workers, who were given simple flight training. At the end of this training they were made reserve lieutenants of the Army Air Force and became poor pilots. The association also trained paratroopers. In about 1945 measures were taken to increase the quantity of officers available for the artillery and navy. This was done by creating eleven military high schools for the ground forces and four schools for the navy. All students were the orphans of veterans of World War II. The high schools for the ground forces were called the "Suvorovskii Shkoli or Uchilishi." The high schools for the navy were called the "Nakhimovskiye Shkoli or Uchilishi." Graduates of the Suvorov schools went primarily to the artillery military schools, whereas those from the Nakhimov schools went to the naval schools.
5. In regard to the question of how highly trained engineering, scientific, medical and other specialists were procured by the armed services, the "VoenKomats" [redacted] had lists of specialists who should not be called up in event of war and of others who must be called to the colors. However, if the army wished to acquire the services of an outstanding specialist, even in peace time, it made an informal request to the "VoenKomat" to call up the specialist and the request was granted.

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